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A dark form went off in the darkness toward the misty river, and Tillie was lying, sobbing out her anguish.

through the window, and beheld a young girl seated by bright fire of drift. She was a beautiful girl; there could be no mistake about that. Eyes large, dewy, and blue as summer skies; skin white as moonbeams; and a lithe, graceful, girlish figure, that looked dainty and pretty even in the faded alpaca which she wore.

"Pretty as ever," said the stranger; and then he dropped his oars, and, turning the knob of the door, entered.

"Oh, Mark, dear, is that you?" She was upon her feet in an instant, her face beaming with a new light, and her scarlet mouth all smiles and dimples.

He put his arm around her in a familiar, lover-like way, and kissed her. "What have you been doing?"

"Waiting for you, darling."

"That all?"

"Yes, that's all I've done since dark."

"You might have been better employed, then. Looking and waiting for a miserable creature like me is not very profitable work."

A shade of doubt and fear passed over the girl's face as she looked up into that of her companion.

"Oh, Mark, what do you mean? What's happened? You frightened me."

"I almost frighten myself when I stop to think. I'm ruined—disgraced—that's all! Ain't it enough?"

"Disgraced! How? Tell me." She put up her arms about his neck, coaxingly.

"Well, the long and short of it is just this: I have been betting against the bank in a Gravier street gambling-hell, off and on, for a week back. My winnings were large at first, but since Thursday luck has been against me, and I've lost a round ten thousand. You see, Tillie, I've been going it, and now, on this blessed Saturday night, I'm five thousand worse than nothing."

"But you can borrow—"

"No, no," waving his hand. "I've done that, and worse—a good deal worse."

"Worse, Mark Blanchard! Surely you have not committed a theft?"

"Not exactly. I'm too much of a gentleman for that, you know, but I've forged my Uncle Gabriel's name for five thousand dollars. Don't start, Tillie. I had to have the money, and I could not get it in any other means."

The girl was deathly pale now, and trembled as if with ague as she said.

"And, Mark, what—what do you propose to do?"

"Well, to tell you frankly, I've made up my mind to try a foreign climate for a while. I'm going to Mexico to-night."

"To-night? Oh, Mark! you are not going without me, are you, darling? You won't leave me behind? I'd die without you, dearest, I know I would." She wound her arms tighter about him, and looked up appealingly.

He caught both her hands in his, and looked an instant into her face, saying, at length:

"You must have sense now, Tillie. This is no time for sentiment, with only that river there between Captain Cain and his

hungry police and I, and a gloomy State prison in the background. I don't fancy Baton Rouge much as a place of residence. That I may escape that, I've determined to go to Mexico this very night."

"Then I will go with you to-night, Mark. We shall never be separated. I am your wife, and nothing should part man and wife."

"Neither shall any thing part us, darling. But, remember this: I have to go at once; must make my way through the swamps in order to dodge the police, and I'm afraid taking you would not add to my chances of escape much."

"And you are going to leave me, then? Oh, Mark, darling, I can not stand that. It will kill me."

He smoothed her bright hair back until it fell in a torrent of gold over her shoulders.

The alternative is not pleasant," he said, a length, "and I would do any thing—make any sacrifice—to avoid it, save my liberty. I could not live ten years in a State prison, darling; that would kill me, you see; and I know my little rose-bud could not live after that. Now, which do you think best—go to Mexico and have you join me there in a few weeks, or go up the river. Look up now; decide."

There was a moment's silence; broken only by the sobs of the girl, and he continued:

"Go on, darling; decide; time is precious."

She looked up now through her tears.

"I don't know what to say; what do you propose?"

"Just this. I will slip off to-night, and when I reach the other side of the Rio Grande, I will send for you. After a while my uncle Gabriel will forgive me, and we will return, and I will acknowledge you as my wife. You see, the case is not so desperate, if only a little tact is displayed, in the management of details."

"And how long will all this take?" asked Tillie, still weeping bitterly.

"A year or two. Come, we will not think the time long once we are united in Mexico. I can make a fortune in the mines, for that master, while in exile."

They talked a long while, and, at length, he succeeded in winning the girl over to his view of the matter.

When he had done so he said, all at once,

"Where is Pettis and Sallie?"

"In the next room," answered Tillie. "I guess they have gone to bed. Do you want to see Pettis?"

"No; there is no necessity for that. You can give the old couple this purse," handing a wallet; "it will pay them for your board, and insure you good treatment until I send for you."

She took the purse mechanically, and said: "Oh, Mark Blanchard, you don't know, can never guess, how much I love you. I have left my poor old father lonely and wretched away up there in Tennessee because I loved you better than all the world, and because I trusted you. You will be true to me; you will repay that devotion by truthfulness and loyalty; you will not, no

matter what may come, desert me. Will you, Mark?"

A shadow passed over Mark Blanchard's face. This appeal had touched him; yes, heartless, sordid as he was, that petition had reached his heart. He was evidently wavering. He could not carry out his bold, bad design, which was intended to crush out all the happiness of that poor girl's life. A vision of a happy home on the Cumberland, in the heart of the iron mines, came up out of the glowing fire; of a wretched old pair; of an empty chair.

He was fast melting. He gathered the girl closer to him, and kissed her passionately.

"Good-by, Tillie! Good-by!"

The cabin door opened and closed again; a dark form went off in the darkness toward the misty river, and Tillie was lying, sobbing out her anguish.

CHAPTER II.

PLOTTING AND THE PLOTTERS.

WHEN Mark Blanchard left the cabin, he betook himself at once to his boat again. After he had turned from the shore, and was, perhaps, a yard or two out in the stream, he paused a moment, as in thought; then he rowed on again a short distance and stopped, still undecided.

"Perhaps I had better see Silas, to-night," he thought, "or while I am in this tender mood, my courage may forsake me, if I do not resort to some potent stimulant. Yes, I'll go."

He spoke the last words boldly and in a loud voice; so loud, in fact, that he was startled himself. What if some person had overheard? But there was little to fear from that; the rain was beating its even tattoo upon the river, and nothing could be seen but the distant lights of the great city.

The prow of the boat was turned quartering down the stream, and the young man bent steadily to the oar. He was perfectly soaked with the falling rain when he stepped ashore, at last, and looked around.

"Ah, to be sure! there's the old Port Market, and there, right across in that old ruin, my friend and helpmate resides. A nice place for a man's friends to live, and a nice place for a nice young man like Mark Blanchard to be prowling around after midnight."

All the time he was speaking he was walking away from the river, leaving the rickety old Port Market, black as a huge beetle, with its clumsy outstretched wings and rows of legs, to his left.

Opposite the market a row of tall, grim-looking houses stood. From the first floor of one of these a ray of light struggled out upon the pavements. Blanchard stopped in front of this house and looked in at the open doorway. A screen, on which was painted a ship in full sail, prevented him from catching a sight of the bar-room, but he could hear the sound of a great many voices, and occasionally the clink of glasses and snatches of songs in French and Spanish, and he knew the tap-room was full of

IN THE WEB; OR, THE GIRL-WIFE'S TRIALS.

A HEART AND LIFE ROMANCE OF THE CRESCENT CITY.

BY EDWIN SOUTH.

CHAPTER I.

MAN AND WIFE.

IT was a dark October night, a little raw and exceedingly disagreeable. The rain had been falling in a vexatious drizzle all day, and the wind that came up from the east, a little before sunset, drove it in wreaths of mist and spray from the great rolling river over the low-lying Crescent City.

The sails of the clusters of ships huddled below and above Canal street were drenched, and shook dismal, and dripped steadily, in a dreary way, until the shadows of night brought a calm, and hid them from view. Then the lights—red and green-twinkled from the smoke-stacks of the steamboats and glared through the fog and rain from the high decks of ocean crafts.

It was an ugly night on the river; but, notwithstanding, there were plenty of open boats afloat, from Carrollton to the grim-looking, but now deserted, Mint.

One of these boats sat a young man, dressed in deep black—his handsome face more than half concealed by a broad-brimmed slouched hat, which may have been worn partly for the purpose of concealment and partly to guard his face from the storm.

He pushed out from the foot of Natchez street boldly into the stream, and, with far-reaching strokes, pulled down the river, heading his tiny vessel for the right bank.

Down past the rows of steamers and stacks of freight piled high upon the levee; down past the fringe of gas-lights twinkling through the fog; down past Algiers, half hid under the bank; nothing to be heard all this time,

save the rain on the river and the rattle of the oars.

Finally the man stopped rowing and glanced toward the right bank. He was within fifty feet of the levee, and could see the shore distinctly.

"That's it. I thought it could not be far from here," he said, bucking water with his right oar and pulling with the other.

A black Bremen steamship was anchored between the skiff and the land, and seemed to raise its big bulk up out of the water to the trailer craft's way.

The young man looked at the huge monster, and then exclaiming—"Drat the Dutch hulk! I'll have to go below her," suffered the skiff to drop down with the current.

When he could see the light on her stern he plied the oars lustily, and in a few moments had landed.

Leaping ashore, he dragged the skiff up on the sand, and, taking the oars upon his shoulders, stalked away toward a cabin that stood about a hundred yards from the river.

It was a humble-looking abode, standing in the center of a huge cane-field, and on the night of which we write looked very lonely indeed, isolated as it was, and shabby, too.

A light was gleaming from the window that looked out upon the river, and when the young man saw this, he muttered:

"Watching for me as usual, eh? Ah! I wish I hadn't this matter on hand. It's an unpleasant job, but fortune has been fickle with me, and has ruined my constancy, and conscience, too."

When he reached the cabin, he looked in

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maudlin sailors, representing almost every nationality in the universe.

Placing his fingers in his mouth, he gave three long, sharp whistles.

The sound had scarce died away when the screen was pushed aside, and a large, muscular man stepped briskly forward. He was dressed in a suit of black, fashionably cut and well-fitting, his shirt collar turning low down upon his neck, and a large neckerchief tied jauntily, but loosely, an inch or two below the upper button. His shirt-bottom was a mass of ruffles, and a small emerald pin gleamed amid the snowy meshes.

"Hello, my boy!" he exclaimed, as soon as his eyes rested upon Blanchard. "What's the row?"

"I want to see you, Silas, about that little affair across the river."

"The d—l you do. Well, speak out. I'm always ready to talk business, or help a friend in a scrape or out of one."

"I don't like to tell you every thing here," said Mark, glancing uneasily around.

"Of course we can. Follow me." The man who called Silas now stepped to a dingy-looking hall-door, and taking out a night-key opened it.

"Rather dark in there," remarked Blanchard, hesitating to follow his companion.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid. Here, give me your hand. Now grip the baluster and hold to it all the way up."

Blanchard obeyed, and was soon mounting the creaking stairs.

They stopped at the third landing and groped their way along a gloomy hall. Presently they paused before a door, through the key-hole of which a ray of light penetrated into the darkness.

Silas rapped on the door and called out:

"Mangy! Mangy!"

Presently the door was softly opened, and the two men walked into a brilliantly-lighted room. Daintily-flowered carpets, soft-cushioned sofas and tall, gilded mirrors, looked brighter and better after that tramp through the dark, wet night and through the bare halls of that crazy old building.

"By Jove! Silas, you have things fixed nicely up here," said Mark, as soon as he had crossed the threshold.

"Why, you don't think I'd live any way else do you—leastwise, as long as Mangy stays here?"

Blanchard now, for the first time, was aware of the presence in the room of a tall, graceful girl. She was seated on a sofa beside the door when his eyes fell upon her, her hands folded idly upon her lap, and her dark luminous eyes were looking up into his, with a questioning gaze.

Her complexion was of the brownish-olive, and from her low forehead drifts of purplish-black hair were rolled back into a coil, that looked very much like an ebony crown.

Her shapely form was robed in the finest cashmere, and a cluster of gems held the ends of a collar of real lace, where her delicately-rounded throat ended.

She colored slightly, as she met Mark's gaze, and dropped her eyes shyly.

"You needn't blush, Mangy," said Silas, bluntly. "Mister Blanchard is a married man, or, leastwise, is going to be—which, darling, is all the same, you know."

"The lady is not Mrs. Norman then?" asked Blanchard.

"Well, I rather think not, seeing she ain't Miss at all. That's my daughter, Mark; and, Mangy, this is my old friend Blanchard."

The young girl bowed in recognition of the introduction, and Mark could not help noting how graceful she was.

"As the captain here has some private business with me," continued Silas, "you may go to bed, Mangy."

The girl arose, and bidding the two men good-night, left them.

"Splendid girl," exclaimed Silas. "Always waits up for me. Would never go to bed if I would not come up here and tell her to do so. Beautiful as an angel, and delicate as a lamb. Don't often meet such girls, captain, in New Orleans."

"No, and rarely anywhere else," answered Mark; "but I never knew you had a daughter, Norman. Where has the girl been kept?"

"Well, up at Saint Genevieve. I've had her schooled up there, but I brought her home for a week or two, and I intend to send her over to Biloxi for the summer. You see, cap, this is not the kind of a place for a good girl, and I would not have her find out how cussed mean her father is for the world—no, siree! not for the world."

There was a moment's silence. At length Mark said, rubbing his hands together as he spoke:

"Well, Silas, I have taken your advice so far; I have seen Tillie to-night, and your trumped-up story served the purpose well. To tell the whole truth, though, I nearly broke down a couple of times, I'm so tender-hearted, and hate scenes so."

Silas Norman smiled derisively as he listened, and when Mark had finished, answered:

"Yes, you're very tender-hearted—all young 'uns are, but, when you 'ave seen as much of the world's cunning deceit as I have, you'll be as tired of chicken-hearted people as I am."

"You can't blame a fellow for feeling badly at parting with his lawful wedded wife for the last time—can you?"

"Well, no," answered Silas; "it's a tough matter, I'll confess; but, you see there is a cool hundred thousand dollars and Miss Blanche Davenant on the opposite side of the scale. Nothing like gold to outweigh love and nonsense. But, tell me, what did you say to-night?"

"I told her," Mark replied, "that I had forged uncle Gabriel's name for a large amount; that I was forced to leave the city; that I had chosen Mexico for my future residence, and, in a fortnight, I would send a man after her, and that we should be reunited again west of the Rio Grande."

"Did you tell her who the man would be?"

"No. You know you was not sure Turner would do the business, and I thought it would be better not to say anything about it. It leaves us free to make other arrangements."

"Very cute" and Norman winked slightly at his companion. "It's a pity your talents have not been exercised more fully. Deception seems to come quite natural to you."

"Rather a dubious compliment, Norman, but, I suppose you're right. However, when I get rid of Tillie, and find myself master of old Davenant's ducats and old Davenant's daughter, I'll join church and lead a model life."

"Repent, eh?"

"Yes; do works meet for repentance, at least. But, have you spoke to Turner yet?"

"Not yet; he's a little flush now; made a winning at the 'Polka' last night, and Turner's one of those kind of fellows it don't do to arrange with when he's flush."

"High priced when flush, I suppose?"

"No, not that. Now, you wouldn't believe it, but it's a fact, he gets jobs, or honorable as he calls it, whenever his pocket-book is heavy."

"But when he's short of funds?"

"Well, then, he is ready for anything. Ah, Blanchard! poverty is the worst of vices. You'll find that out if you live long enough."

"It strikes me," said Mark, after a pause, "that Turner is not the right kind of a man for this job."

"Why not?"

"Well, in the first place, this is one of those peculiar jobs that no man with a conscience, or too fine a sense of honor, can undertake. And if Turner should betray us, I would have to leave New Orleans for certain, and no mistake."

"Right—quite right. But I know my man. I'll bet on his word if he gives it once; and, besides, I have got claims upon him that make him my slave, and he is so gentle, and looks so honest!" Any woman would believe Turner on his shape. Nothing like a polished exterior, my boy; you know that."

Blanchard assented, and then said: "Norman, I'll make it a thousand dollars if you manage this thing discreetly."

The two men clasped hands, and Norman simply said:

"Good!"

"When can I see you again, Silas?"

"Well, say the night after tomorrow night. I'll meet you at the Polka."

"All right. Good-night."

"Good-night," answered Norman.

Blanchard stepped out into the dark hall, and Silas stood in the doorway of the room in which they had sat, until the visitor groped his way to the head of the stairs; then, turning on his heel, he muttered

"What a precious scoundrel are you, Mr. Mark Blanchard, Esquire—what a precious scoundrel!"

The last words were spoken slowly and aloud, and then Silas Norman threw himself upon a sofa at full length, and began to think—to think of the past, that had such a terror for him.

CHAPTER III.

A PAGE FROM THE PAST.

On the following morning Mark Blanchard arose quite early, and dressed very carefully. He was an orphan, and resided with his uncle Gabriel Blanchard, at the latter's splendid residence, on Charles street, almost a mile west of Tivoli Circle, where the orange and magnolia blend their fruits and blossoms from June to January, in beautiful profusion, and where the air is heavy with delicious scents.

Mark was fortunate in being the favorite of a bachelor uncle, who was as rich as he was irritable, and who had been used so long to having undisputed sway over the fortunes of his nephew that he at length regarded him pretty much in the same light as he would any other piece of human property attached to his estate.

This, of course, was very galling to a young man of Mark's wayward disposition, but a rupture with his uncle meant poverty, and Mark was too luxuriant in his tastes to ever think of giving up his brilliant pecuniations.

It was his uncle Gabriel who had taken him from his mother's dying arms; it was his uncle Gabriel who had paid for his tuition at Dartmouth, and it was his uncle Gabriel's plan and hope that he should wed the youngest child of his old friend, Richard Davenant.

Blanche was young, beautiful and an heiress. Gabriel Blanchard would have doted upon a woman like her in his youth, and it was but natural he concluded that the taste of his nephew would run in the same channel.

Colonel Davenant resided, during the summer, on his plantation on the Bayou La Fourche, but the winter months were spent at his city residence, in the most exclusive part of that very exclusive neighborhood, of which Prytania street is the center.

The night of the day of which we write, Blanche Davenant was to be his first party of the season. It was to be a select affair; only the cream of the Creole society were honored with invitations, and very few regrets were to be expected.

Everybody knew that Mark Blanchard had secured the heiress, and those who were most intimate even knew that the wedding would take place on the following Christmas Eve; therefore, the beaux turned their eyes and compliments to other shrines, and belles felt, when they looked upon the stately Mark, that he was beyond the reach of speculation, just the same as if the marriage rites had been solemnized.

Now, it might be thought that Mark Blanchard felt proud on this morning, and perhaps happy, too; but, nothing could well be further from the truth. He was very miserable. The coming *feête* was to prove his power to dissemble. In the glitter and glare of fashion he hoped to drown all the memories of his deserted wife. That he would be equal to the occasion he very much doubted. He admired Blanche, but he loved, as devotedly as he was capable of loving anybody, the poor confiding child whom he had won but six months before.

Had not his uncle set his heart on this new alliance, he would have been true to Tillie Maynard. But he had never openly disobeyed his uncle, and his secret marriage, were it to become known, he felt sure would disinherit him.

Work for his living, with his dainty white hands, he could not. He could gamble, he could lie, he could deceive; but labor was a step nearer social degradation than he cared to take, and so his marriage vows were forgotten, and the wife of a few months was worse than widowed.

With the glad October sunshine streaming in a yellow flood about him, through the open window, and the carols of the mocking-birds in his ears, and all around him luxury and splendor, he felt a pang of regret for Tillie.

"Poor Tillie," he muttered, "I will see to it that you shall not suffer for the comforts of life. You shall share the price of the sacrifice, and I know I'll not be wholly free from the pain. I do wonder if she'll suffer much? Norman's plan of having me killed off is a capital idea; it will turn her thoughts in a new direction when she has nothing but the grave and eternity to look to."

There was a shuffling, shambling tread on the soft-carpeted stairs; then the door was softly opened, and a bright mulatto girl put her head in at the chink.

"Come in," he said, impatiently.

The young man's face glowed with a new light, and he was about to pour forth a fresh stream of thanks, when Gabriel motioned him to remain silent, saying, in a low voice, and with an uneasy glance around the room:

"But, there is a reservation in favor of another person, or persons, and it is of this I wish now to speak to you."

Again the old man glanced around as if fearing of being overheard, and then added: "Let's go to the library; I can't tell tell."

They arose, and passing through a long corridor, entered a sumptuously furnished apartment. The furniture was of ebony, and the walls were lined with heavily carved book-cases, filled with volumes in fine calf and expensive morocco.

The old man pointed his nephew to a seat, and sinking into one himself, threw his head back and looked up at the ceiling for a moment or two.

At length he said:

"I am not, or, at least, I was not always, a crusty old fellow, such as most people believe me to be. I have a heart somewhere which all these years of money-making has not made callous, and once—it appears now a great many years ago—I gave all the wealth of love that heart contained to a poor orphan girl in Virginia. She did not return my passion, but gave herself to another.

"This, of course, maddened me; and, six months after she became his wife, I made her a widow."

Mark Blanchard started and looked frightened. Gabriel, noticing this, continued:

"But, I did not murder him; we met as equals; the chances were rather against me, but I came out victor. My bullet penetrated his left side, and while he lay dying in the arms of his friends, I fled from Roanoke to the West Indies."

"And the widow?" put in Mark.

"Poor Sybil; I never had the heart to inquire whether she lived or died."

There were tears in Gabriel Blanchard's eyes, and he continued: "That's twenty years ago, and, as I have said, it appears quite forty of them. I have kept my secret well, for it never crossed my lips before."

"And why have you told me this now, uncle?" asked Mark.

"Because I want to make a reservation in my will in favor of Sybil Grainer; if she is living, at my death, or in favor of her heirs in case she is not."

"But, not until your death, uncle?"

"Not until my death. I could not bear to have her or hers until the grave lifts its shade between us. Oh, Mark Blanchard, my life has been a weary one; God knows how weary."

"No doubt, dear uncle," answered Mark; "but, what am I to do in case of your early demise? Tell me."

"Search out Sybil Grainer, and give her twenty thousand dollars. Will you do this?"

"Yes, sir, I will."

"Swear it."

The young man lifted a Bible, and kissing it, said, solemnly: "I swear!"

(To be continued.)

"Mas'r Mark, de gub'nor is waitin' breakfast. I's sent up for you, sab."

"Tell the governor I'll be down in a jiffy, Mattie."

"In a what, sab?"

"Confound you, in a jiffy—in a moment. Don't you understand?"

"Yes, sab, in a jiffy. May I, please?"

"Mas'r Mark, may I help wid it?"

"Help me with what? Are you taking leave of your senses?"

"No, sab, I t'ot I might give some 'sistance down sta's wid dat ting."

"What ting? Confound it, what are you talking about?"

"De jiffy. It's mighty strong, Mas'r Mark."

The young man smiled, and said: "I guess I'll manage it myself, Mattie. You can go."

The woolly-head disappeared, and Mark Blanchard sighed as he said: "I don't know what's the reason everybody likes me, even to that poor ignorant nigger. I used to feel proud of this, but now I am so unworthy of love and kindness, that every attention appears to wound rather than please me."

He looked into the mirror on the ivory mandepiece, gave a few strokes to his silken mustache, and then whistling an aria from "Martha" went down to the elegant breakfast-room where his uncle awaited him.

Gabriel Blanchard was a gentleman of sixty-five, with a bushy side-whiskers of a sheen, silvery blue, and large, kindly blue eyes. His mouth, too, was large, and

"Thanks, noble captain," and the soldier withdrew.

"I must see Isabel at once," Estevan said, moodily.

CHAPTER XIV.

ESTEVAN DECLARES HIS LOVE.

The Spanish officer walked slowly toward the house of the commandante.

A dark look was upon his face. It was evident that his thoughts were far from being pleasant ones.

"I must have an understanding with Isabel at once," he muttered. "I will tell her that I know of this foolish passion she has for the American. I am sure that she met him in the forest, this afternoon.

The spy that dogged Rogue's footsteps was probably some friend of the American, whom he had placed on the watch to prevent any one from interrupting his meeting with the girl. If my hand has not lost its cunning, I'll send this red-skinned American to the devil ere he is many days older. The heretic will be at home there. And as for Isabel, she shall know that I am not to be easily deceived."

As Estevan approached the house, he saw the black, Geno, stretched out at full length in the sun.

"Where is your mistress?" the Spaniard asked.

"Up dar, dar," and the black pointed to the curtained window that looked from the second story of the mansion upon the fragrant garden.

Estevan proceeded at once to Isabel's room, knocked lightly at the door and heard the clear voice of the girl bid him enter.

Obeying the command on the instant, Estevan entered the apartment.

Isabel was seated by the window that looked into the garden on the side of the house.

"Has the senorita entirely recovered from the fatigue of last night's ball?" the Spaniard asked, taking a chair and seating himself by the side of the girl as he spoke.

"Oh, yes," Isabel answered, slowly. "She felt ill at ease in the presence of the Spanish captain. There was an awkward coldness in her manner that she could not shake off, though she strove with all her power to appear unconcerned.

"Allow me to compliment you upon your appearance last night. You were the belle of the evening. My heart swelled with pride when I looked upon your loveliness, and the thought came to me that, some day, you might make me the proud master of those charms."

Isabel cast down her eyes, and a shade passed over her face. She felt that an unpleasant scene was about to occur.

"Isabel, I have never openly told you that I loved you, but you must have guessed the truth from a thousand little acts, for I have not attempted to conceal the passion with which you have inspired me," Estevan said, softly, taking the hand of the maiden with his own as he spoke.

Cold as ice, and motionless as pulseless marble, the little white hand of Isabel lay in the grasp of the Spaniard.

"Senor, I—" Isabel stammered, with downcast eyes. She knew not how to speak the truth that she felt must be told.

"May I accept this hesitation as a proof that the avowal of my love is not distasteful to you?" Estevan asked.

With a desperate effort, Isabel spoke.

"Senor, I regret that I must speak words that may give you pain, but the truth must be told: I feel that I can never love you."

Estevan bit his lip. Isabel felt the quick throb of anger that surged through his veins in the iron-like pressure of the hand that held her own a prisoner.

"Do I understand your meaning aright?" he said, slowly; "you refuse the love I offer?"

"I can not help it, senor," Isabel replied.

"If Heaven has not put the love in my heart, is it my fault?"

"And yet you told my father that you would be my wife?"

"No, no, senor, no!" Isabel exclaimed, quickly. "Your father asked me if my heart was free. I replied that I did not love any Pensacola gentleman. He then told me how much it would please him if I could find it in my heart to love you and become your wife. I did not wish to pain him by telling him the truth, and so foolishly held my tongue, and thus led him into error. For, even at the time when he spoke, I knew that it was impossible for me to ever love you as a wife should love her husband."

"Why impossible?" Estevan asked, his face calm, only a ripple of passion in his dark eyes.

"I can hardly tell the reason," Isabel said, in confusion. "I felt that I did not love you, and I did not deem it possible that I ever would love you."

"And you can not tell the reason why you do not and can not love me?" Estevan asked, coldly.

"Why ask me, a woman, for reasons?" Isabel said, evading the question. "It is my sex's privilege to act without reason."

"And yet you do not!" exclaimed Estevan, coldly.

"I do not answer," Estevan said, slowly. "I do not love you, but you have not spoken falsely, yet you have deceived both my father and myself."

"I do not answer," Isabel murmured, her cheeks still burning, and her eyes still bent upon the ground.

"Yes. When my father asked if your heart was free, you answered that you did not love any gentleman of Pensacola."

"Which was the truth," the girl said, raising her soft blue eyes to the face of the Spaniard.

"Yes; but you did not tell him that you did love a stranger—an American!" exclaimed Estevan, anger in his voice.

Again Isabel's eyes sought the floor. As she had suspected, her secret was known.

"You do not answer. Your silence confirms my words," the Spaniard said, with bitter accent.

"I neither deny nor confirm," Isabel said, slowly.

"If you did deny it would be speaking falsely. I know that you love—or think that you love—this stranger, Rupert Vane. I know that you have met him secretly in the forest to day. You dare not deny that I have spoken the truth!"

Isabel was thunderstruck. How the captain could know of her meeting with her lover in the forest passed her comprehension. The tone of Estevan, too, wounded her pride. A little hectic spot began to burn in either cheek. Mild, loving woman as she

was, yet the fire of Spanish blood burned in her veins.

"Senor, you are not my guardian" she said firmly; "I have no account to render you in this matter. If your father chooses to question me, to him I will explain all my actions and give my reason for what I have done."

"You think that you love this vagabond stranger!" cried Estevan, fiercely. The composure of the girl irritated him almost to madness.

"Senor, you forget yourself!" exclaimed Isabel, rising to her feet; "you forget to whom you are!"

"No, I do not!" replied Estevan, scornfully. "I am speaking to a foolish girl who does not know what she is doing—what acts of folly she is committing. But I will save you from this base adventurer in spite of yourself. You shall not walk blindfold to ruin, if my hand can keep you from it."

"I can no longer listen to such language!" exclaimed Isabel, impatiently. "Shall I leave the room, or will you?"

Estevan gazed at the angry girl for a moment in silence, the fire flashing from his dark eyes; then he turned upon his heel, and, without a word, strode out of the room.

The anger of the Spaniard was so great that he did not dare to trust himself to speak.

Isabel watched the door close behind the silent suitor, and then, with a sigh of relief, sank again into her seat.

"I feared this," she murmured, with downcast eyes. "I feared lest they should discover my love for Rupert, but I did not dream that my secret meeting with him in the forest would be revealed. This terrible man must have employed some one to watch me." Then a sudden thought occurred to her. "Oh! I remember now" she said quickly; "the soldier who went into the wine-house. I guessed at the time that he was a spy upon my actions. He must have followed me into the wood, and, concealed by the bushes, have watched my meeting with Rupert."

Then, for a few moments Isabel was silent; her brain busy in thought. "I must steal forth to-night and see Rupert, at all hazards," she said, firmly, and with evident determination. "He must know that the secret of our love is known to the man who should be the last in the world to know it. It is useless grieving over the past; danger threatens in the future; we must take measures to meet it."

Thoughtfully the fair girl leaned her head upon her hand and tried to devise some plan, by means of which she could steal from the house and meet her lover upon the sea-washed plaza, where the mantle of night covered the earth. The difficulty was, to think of some plan to elude the watchful eyes that she was sure would be upon her.

Leaving Isabel to her own busy thoughts, we will follow the footsteps of the Spanish captain.

Estevan's brows were dark with rage as he descended the stairs. He ground his teeth together, fiercely.

"By the Mass, she defies me!" he cried, in anger, communing with himself. "She is proud of her love for this cursed American. Perhaps she thinks that his sword is destined to settle my aspirations for her hand, forever. By Heaven! I am impatient for the time to come when I shall face him, steel in hand. If his skill be more than mine, I am content to die. Would that tomorrow were Monday, so that the affair could be settled at once; but no, it is better as it is," said thoughtfully. "Between now and Monday much may happen," and as he spoke, a dark look, full of treacherous meaning, passed over his face.

Then Estevan descended into the street. A brother officer happening to pass at the moment, Estevan accosted him.

"Lieutenant, a moment, please."

The officer, a little swarthy fellow, by name, Cadova, approached. His reputation was far from being good, as he was noted as a bully and a gamester, besides being one of the most determined duelists in the Spanish service.

"At your service, captain," Cadova said.

"Lieutenant, I have a favor to ask at your hands."

"Command me."

"I wish you to act as my second in a little affair that I have on hand."

"Certainly—delighted!" The eyes of the lieutenant sparkled with joy. Next to fighting a duel himself, he liked to assist at one.

"Who is she?"

"Did you notice two strangers at the ball last night?"

"Americans?"

"Yes."

"Friends of Senor Garcia?"

"Yes."

"I saw them. Which one?"

"The shorter of the two; the one whose face is reddened like an Indian's."

"What is the cause of the affair?"

"He looked too long at a lady that I fancy, then took a walk by moonlight, and a man shot at him from behind a bush. He charges that I tried to murder him and has challenged me," Estevan said, in explanation.

"These Americans are so suspicious," the Lieutenant exclaimed, with a shrewd smile.

"Yes; come to my quarters and I'll explain every thing."

So arm in arm the two proceeded.

CHAPTER XV.

A NEW FOE.

On the broad veranda that surrounded the house of the merchant, sat the two Americans and their host, Senor Garcia.

The moon, sailing high in the heavens, cast its bright light over town and bay.

Garcia examined his watch. Rupert had explained to him the favor that he sought at his hands.

"It is nearly half-past nine," Garcia said, "almost time for your guide to come."

"Do you think that the captain really means to fight?" asked Rupert.

"Oh, yes, undoubtedly," Garcia replied; "he is treacherous, as his attempt on your life proved, but not a coward. Besides, should he refuse to meet you, he would lose what little reputation he possesses. I have no doubt though that if he could find a chance to take your life secretly, he would not hesitate a moment to do so."

"I think that he will meet me?"

"Yes; the explanation is easy. You have challenged him; he can not avoid meeting you. He probably relies on his skill in the use of the sword to remove you from his path."

"But why this haste after expressly stating to Andrews here that he would not meet me until Monday?" Rupert asked.

"Possibly from a wish to get the affair off his mind as quickly as he can. I confess, his haste puzzles me, and I can think of no other reason for it than the one I have given."

"Is he pretty cute with the sword?" Andrews asked.

"Yes, he bears the reputation of being one of the best swordsmen in the Spanish army," Garcia replied.

"I say, you'll have to try one of your neat touches on him, like you showed the English officer on the deck of the Bull Dog. I never saw a critter finished so quickly in all my born days. Your sword went through him like a streak of greased lightning."

"You are expert with the sword then, Semper Rupert?" Garcia asked.

"Yes; when I was quite a lad I learned to handle the weapon." Rupert replied.

"Believe me, you will need all your cunning, for this captain is a master of this matter."

"Hello! here's somebody coming up the street!" cried Andrews, hastily.

By the light of the moonbeams they saw a dark figure approaching rapidly.

"Is it our man?" Rupert said, rising.

"I think it is," Andrews replied, after a good look at the approaching stranger. Through the night was warm, he had a cloak wrapped around him.

"The youth—for it was the young man that had brought the message of the Spanish captain—bowed as he ascended the steps that led to the veranda.

"I hope I have not kept you waiting, senor," he said, in a frank and open manner.

"A few minutes only," Rupert replied. "Allow me to introduce my friend, Senor Garcia."

The youth bowed.

"The senor will accompany us?" the youth asked.

"Yes."

"You are all ready?"

"Yes."

"Let us set out, then; twenty minutes will bring us to the place of meeting."

"Proceed."

The three followed the messenger of Estevan, left the town behind, and pursued his way by the water, leading to the forest. Ere long, they came to a little opening in the wood.

By the light of the moonbeams they saw a dark figure, wrapped in a cloak, standing near a tree on the upper edge of the opening.

Andrews nudged Rupert and called his attention to the cloaked figure.

"There he is," the Yankee said, in a whisper.

Garcia looked at the motionless man with a puzzled expression upon his face.

"I do not think that that is the captain," he said, in a guarded tone, to the two Americans. "He is taller than Senor Estevan."

The doubt was soon verified, for as they advanced, the man in a cloak came toward them, and the three friends saw that they looked upon the face of a stranger.

"The doctor, gentlemen," said the youth.

The stranger bowed, opened his cloak, and displayed the shining blades of two swords.

"Quer instruments for a doctor," muttered Andrews, as he spoke, firmly.

Andrews, and as he spoke, he surveyed the face of the strange attentively.

"This Spanish bully, then, fears to meet the man whose life he has attempted, assassin-like!" exclaimed Rupert, a sneer curling his lips.

"Senor, you wrong the captain!" cried the youth, quickly. "Again I say, he knows nothing of this meeting. It is a device of mine to have you fight me instead of him. Surely it can not matter to you whom you cross swords with."

"You are a boy, no match for me," said Rupert, in contempt.

"Prove that by fighting me!" cried the youth, fiercely.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 55.)

AGILE PENNIE's pen is as enticing as a beautiful and intelligent woman's smile. "Strange Stories" are such, and how delightfully told! His City Life Mirror is one

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Foolscap Papers.

Thermopylae.

UNLOOSEN your ears, dear readers, and lend them to me while I, as a true historian of the past, bring vividly to your recollections the terrible battle of Thermopylae.

Turning to the pages of Greeley's "What I know about Farming," I find that this celebrated muss happened subsequent to the making of the world, and in the remote eras of antiquity, years before Hendrick Hudson discovered the city of New York. It was fought between two opponents, the Greeks and the Persians, and was brought about by the Alabama claims.

Greece, you are aware, lies on the 20th page of Mitchell's Atlas, while Persia is a kingdom lying off the coast of the Pontifical Sea, in 20 degrees north longitude, and 13 degrees east latitude, and contains an area (to be very precise) of many square miles, and a population of, in round numbers, quite a lot.

The Persians had also been seriously annoyed by the Spartans stealing their chickens and getting in their watermelon patches, so Xerxes, who long had spotted Greece, swore he would not leave a grease spot of her, and, raising an army with a patent derrick, he started singing, "We are coming, Father Abraham, we are coming it rather strong."

Leonidas, hearing of the proposed raid, hastily gathered three hundred home-guards together, armed with nothing else but swords, and grind-stones to sharpen them, and went and took his stand at the pass of Thermopylae.

There wasn't a bit of fighting, and every thing went smoothly until the appearance of the Persians, when their advance guard, composed of Louisiana regiments, came up on the Spartans on foot, and went down on their heads immediately, for the Spartans, who were all blacksmiths, with brawny arms, battered them by battalions, and then went to grinding their swords.

Xerxes, finding his men going down, but failing to come to fire or anything else, ordered his artillers to shell the Spartans with a Little Giant corn-sheller, and the bumble-bees to get the bombs ready; then, he ranged his dray-goons in single saw-file and charged the Spartans severely to have themselves and go home to their mothers, intimating if they didn't, he would arrest them and confine them in Libby prison for stopping the procession; but the Spartans only ground their swords again, and whetted them on their boots, and stood their ground against the irresistible tide of the enemy, that swept down upon them with brooms, and immediately went back to the pass.

Did you ever fall off a fence and try to run your head through a brick pavement? If so, you can imagine the utter impossibility of the Persians piercing the Spartan lines.

Xerxes sent a messenger, asking if they would surrender, and what their terms would be. They returned an answer that their terms were cash; and that, under no earthly consideration, would they consent to move until the first of May, which is general moving day, and that they would continue to wage war until they got better wages.

Xerxes, boiling overboard with rage and vexation, seized a buggy-whip and attempted to drive them from their position, but they stood by their guns and showered brickbats into the brick-ades of the enemy, whereby they made lots of brick kilns.

Up to this time the Spartans had only lost 280 men, but the battle showed no signs of stopping until the fighting was ended.

The brave Leonidas, amid all the hue and cry, continued to cry and hew down the Persians, only stopping once to light his pipe and adjust his cravat. His Toledo blade flashed in the sun like the spokes in a new carriage-wheel, and heads flew off about as fast as they do at the commencement of a new administration; and large bodies of troops, you know, are not worth much for active service without heads, heads being, as you also know, indispensable. Where would we wear our hats if we hadn't heads? Think of it seriously! But, let us not run into metaphysics, as if we had already lost our heads.

At this time all the brave three hundred Spartans were alive except two hundred and ninety-six men, and they showed no signs of going home to supper, and as they had only two million men to oppose they fought braver than ever, with six swords in each hand, firing their revolvers with their toes; while the Persians continued to come down like a sheep on the fold. At nightfall there was one Spartan left, and with a turning-lathe he succeeded in turning the chromatic scale of battle, and the Persians were sole proprietors of a number one defeat. The remaining Spartan didn't remain long, but ran home to tell the news and brag about the fight and get the nomination for sheriff of the county, but he fell into a misstatement of the facts and broke his neck, and never got over it. So, beware, my friends, that you fall into misstatements, unless you have extra confidence in your necks.

Now, as the battle of Thermopylae is over, I must go down-town and buy some dried herring, as my wife is to have a little party this evening in honor of a new set of false teeth which she just got to-day. May this battle never occur again!

Yours with pride,

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

HELP.—It is a lovely word; and it should be an awful reflection that heaven gives the working of its solemn spell to almost every one on earth.

POLITENESS.

Oh, rare virtue! that should be as common as water and as free as the air!

To a young man, starting in life, we say, be sure that a large stock of politeness is included in your baggage, and don't be afraid of using it freely. Give it to the world on every possible occasion. It is astonishing how a liberal stock of politeness, and a free use of the aforesaid article, will help a young man in the battle of life.

You ask a man a civil question; he answers you gruffly, rudely; you thank him politely, as if he has done you a great service, and had answered in the most civil of tones. You heap coals of fire on his head.

Your politeness teaches him what a surly brute he has been. Few men in this world have the cuticle of the rhinoceros, and that alone defies the keen-pointed lance, politeness.

Young man, never travel without that useful weapon, ready, in your tongue and hand, to fling at the head of the mortal who dares to forget the great principles of common courtesy.

Politeness has made men and fortunes many a time since the world was young.

The dashing cavalier, Sir Walter Raleigh, won the favor of the virgin queen, Elizabeth, by stripping off his gay velvet cloak and casting it over a maddly spot, so that her Grace of England might not soil her dainty slipper. The act of politeness cost Sir Walter his cloak, but gained him the favor of his sovereign. Step by step he mounted, until he stood among the first of England's peers.

A stranger enters the mansion of a Spanish gentleman. "My house and all within it are yours!" exclaims the courtly host, in stately politeness. It is but a form—a simple joining of words without actual meaning—but the custom has given Spain the first place among all nations for politeness.

You admire a Spaniard's horse.

"You like the animal? It is yours, senor."

Again, there is no real meaning in the sentence. The polite host does not intend to give you the horse, and would be greatly astonished if you should take him at his word and attempt to take the beast away with you. It is but a custom.

In old times, when men's hearts glowed with loyalty, and they looked upon the man who wore the kingly crown as being something better than the rest of humans, when, in the drinking bout, they filled their glasses for the first toast, "The King," once the glasses were drained, out of the window they went. The idea being that the beakers should never be soiled by a less noble toast.

That was politeness in another form.

In our far western wilds, where Judge Lynch reigns supreme, and the principles of law are in the breasts of rugged, hard-handed men, even then the code of politeness holds its sway.

The man who refuses a civil invitation to drink—to "poison himself," as the western *argot* hath it—is not gentleman.

The rough fellow who was sentenced to be hung by the vigilantes, for relieving a miner of his gold-dust in the canon, who begged to be hung at nine in the morning instead of ten, as he "generally" had the "shakes" bout that ere time, and the judge generously granted his request, thanked the chief of the vigilantes for his politeness.

So, go where you will, from where the "Yankee leering o'er the Straits of Behring," and Alaska's icebergs are washed by the northern waves, to Afric's burning strand, where the naked savage roams with spear and shield, you will find politeness, in some shape.

Cultivate it! make much of it! it is the oil that causes the wheels of life to run smoothly.

CATS.

I suppose if I were to tell you I liked cats, you'd call me "an old maid," not that I'd care a great deal about it, anyway, but it's best to keep in the good graces of the entire reading public, so I'll only just mention to you that I don't care for the society of feline animals, and I wouldn't wear mourning, or wet my cheeks with tears, if brother Tom were to exterminate the race of his namesakes. So much on that head.

There are women in this world, and men, too, who I think were intended for cats instead of human beings. Notice their soft velvety paws as they beg some favor of you, and then offend them, I'll be bound you'll see the claws, and feel them, too.

That person, who creeps around your house with stealthy tread and catlike con-

sideration, take my word for it, means mischief, and if you don't hear some rumors regarding yourself, then I am no prophet.

A cat will kill a bird, eat it, wash her paws, and look up in your face, as though she said, "I don't see who could have eaten that canary." Can't you think of some individual who bears a resemblance to that cat?

Hasn't some one been casting aspersions upon your character, and said foul things about you, and then licked her paws—I mean washed her hands—and put on a grave-yard look, saying, at the same time, "How can people talk so about their neighbors?" It's a shame to have such prying busybodies about.

Bah! I hate these cats. I want to have a person candid, upright and outspoken, not palaver before your face, and backbite you when you haven't the ghost of a chance to defend yourself. It always makes me shiver to hear a catlike tread. I know that *mischievous* will follow in its wake. An honest person will allow the ground to feel the pressure of his feet. But it's hateful to hear these mischief-makers stealing along and pouncing in upon you, before you have time to settle yourself. We, all of us, have things to say we don't care about every one's overbearing, and it doesn't put us into any kind of a good humor to know some one has been overbearing all we have said.

Hello! Here comes another cat. This time it comes in the shape of an anonymous correspondent, who wishes Eve to write to him on Love! I beg your pardon; I don't write to prascious people, and especially to those who are ashamed to write more than their initials. When a man is not willing to sign his name fair and square to a letter, it doesn't strike me that he can be any too proud of it. This anonymous letter-writing is of too catlike a nature to suit me, and I believe all my readers will have the same opinion.

Have I any more cats handy? I think so. Imagine you have written a poem; some friend praises it, stroking your for the right way, figuratively speaking. Let another friend tell you of its faults, rubbing the fur contrariwise, won't you spit, and scratch,

and mew something about somebody's having no taste? Why are we plagued with so many catlike attributes?

I know we love to be praised, but when a person gives us a candid opinion, it isn't fair to show our claws. It is best to be sincere, and we can do it, too, without hurting any one's feelings. This striking of claws into persons, just because they don't prey you up to the seventh heaven, is perfectly abominable, and to all such I would say: "Go away, pussy; you're treacherous, and treachery is not wanted as either friend or companion" by

EVE LAWLESS.

A PLEA FOR THE BABIES.

WHILE societies are being formed for the prevention of cruelty to animals, some benevolent person ought to form one for the prevention of cruelty to babies.

What the helpless little ones suffer, no one can tell, unless a baby itself could. But, unfortunately, they are denied the blessed privilege of talking, and so must bear whatever any one chooses to put upon them, without protest.

Now, I know about as much about the care of babies, by practical experience, as a North American Indian warrior does, but I am, I trust, gifted with ordinary common sense, and I solemnly protest against subjecting infants to such inhuman barbarities as many of them are subjected to—and that, too, by Christian mothers who would do any thing to save their children pain.

Ignorance, of course, is the root of the evil. But, for goodness sake, tell me if there is anybody so stupid that they do not know that a baby does not want its shoes laced so tightly around its fat little ankles that the flesh above them projects straight over on every side to the distance of half an inch? Let any woman lace her own shoes so, and she would very soon complain of pain from impeded circulation. Snap! would go the string, and off would come the shoe, in short meter; but a baby can neither ask to have its shoes removed, nor remove them. I wonder if women really think that the blood need circulate no further than a child's ankles? It would seem, judging from appearances, that many of them do.

And then, too, the absurd way that some mothers have of pinning an infant's clothing so tightly that its body possesses no more pliability than a stick! Women will compress their own chests in corsets to look small, and their great vanity enables them to endure the pain it causes them, but babies are innocent of any such ignorant and vulgar notions of gentility, and want their clothing loose enough to be comfortable.

Who can limit the evil consequences growing out of this criminal practice of compressing the yielding chest of a growing child? They are almost infinite in extent, and yet mothers persist in doing it.

An old Scotchman once said that "many a baby dies for want of wattle," and I am inclined to think that he was not so far wrong.

Milk is food, not drink, and if any one has faith in the thirst-quenching qualities of the bovine fluid, I would advise them to test it by drinking nothing else some summer day when the mercury is at ninety-six degrees in the shade.

A propos of giving milk to babies—I once

saw a woman give a seven-months old baby a large saucerful of strong tea, while eating her own dinner, and her smilingly complacent reply to my protest was, that "he liked it!" Strange, too, when she had learned ed to him!

I begin to think that, while other sense is plentiful, common-sense is scarce. But, while there are so many mothers—and very young ones at that, there must, of course, be the errors of ignorance. And in the very face of this fact, a certain well-known physician strongly advocates very youthful marriages!

LETTER ARTLEY IRONS.

We have somewhere met with this definition of an effeminate man:

An effeminate man is a weak posit. He is a cross between a root beer and a ginger pop, with the cork left out. A fresh-water mermaid found in a cow-pasture with hands filled with dandelions. He is a teacup of syllabub—a kitten in pantalettes—a sick monkey with a blonde mustache. He is a vine without any tendrils—a fly drowned in oil—a paper kite in a dead calm. He lives like a butterfly—nobody can tell why. He is as harmless as a cent's worth of spruce gum, and as useless as a shirt-button without a hole. He is as lazy as a bread pill, and has no more hope than a last year's grasshopper. He goes through life on tiptoes, and dies like cologne water spilt over the ground.

The church was but a few rods off, and while all this little episode was occurring, the funeral party came out. My pen is too feeble to describe the scene. Can you not imagine it? Mrs. Smithers said we should create a sensation, and didn't we do it?

child and heiress, clad in the garments of "Joan of Arc," knelt at my wife's feet. An angel of sweetness she looked. Debility's wife was supposed to be the "Herald of Joy," and for her trumpet, she used a copy of the "New York Herald" so that people would know just what character she impersonated. I was to drive the old sorrel horse with one hand, and beat the drum with the other. Mrs. Smithers said it would create a sensation, and it did!

The first morning this effect was to be tried, was raw and blustering, and there were signs of snow in the air. I proposed having it delayed to a future day, but Mrs. S., who always has poetry with which to occupy, in case of emergency, replied, "We must not delay:

"Trust no future, how'er pleasant,
Let us all now drive ahead,
It is better to go than wish you had,
The meaning of which you know is 'nuff sed."

Does not Mr. Longfellow so expressively himself?"

"I should hope not, or if he does he must be a mighty queer poet."

But we eventually started, and, when near the wished-for village, our party struck the imposing attitudes, while I struck the big drum, and the old horse, and had a look-out for the anxiously awaiting multitude that was so expectant for our entrance.

The multitude consisted of the blacksmith and his toad-headed urchin, who was having his horse shod. Everybody else was at a funeral. Mrs. S. was cruel enough to remark, that they ought to have postponed the funeral until after we had made our triumphal entrance. We confined our way, lamenting and bewailing our ill luck, the snow coming down all the while. We were near the Hall, when crack, crack went something. I turned around to see what was the matter. Such a tableau as met my gaze, I had never seen before. The entire bottom of the wagon had given way, and Mr. and Mrs. Debility, with my darling girl, were floundering in quite a promiscuous manner. The concussion of the barrel, (on which Mrs. Smithers, Sen., was standing), with the ground, was so great, as to stave in the head of the barrel. Now, said barrel was three-quarters full of molasses, so that my partner was in a tight place. To release her from her peril, I jumped off the cart, but in so doing the big drum, which was full of flour, burst over the old horse.

The church was but a few rods off, and while all this little episode was occurring, the funeral party came out. My pen is too feeble to describe the scene. Can you not imagine it? Mrs. Smithers said we should create a sensation, and didn't we do it?

SMITHERS, THE SHOWMAN.

In Edwin South's new serial, "In the Web; or, The Girl-wife's Trials," we have a romance full of love and tenderness such as is rarely met with. Read it, and enjoy a good feast.

A. S. asks why we don't illustrate all serials in the paper. Since we publish one of the most beautifully illustrated of all the story papers, he would have us give a picture on every page that could not do: space is a valuable article, and we can't afford to give it up. We shall, however, always be governed by the principle—what will make our paper most attractive. Expense, care and labor we care nothing about. We shall always make the SATURDAY JOURNAL the best paper so well known, and bring from the good report of us in all quarters, as well as by the steady and rapid advance in our circulation, we are hitting the nail on the head.

EDWARD ASHESKAWER asks to know about the astrologers who advertise freely in certain papers, and asks: "Can they really foretell our fortunes?" That depends. If you are very strong, and have been born with a "golden fortune" and will give them a liberal fee, they will tell you. We shall, however, always be governed by the principle—what will make our paper most attractive. Expense, care and labor we care nothing about. We shall always make the SATURDAY JOURNAL the best paper so well known, and bring from the good report of us in all quarters, as well as by the steady and rapid advance in our circulation, we are hitting the nail on the head.

MURKIN WISHES to know whether it is etiquette for a young man after he has taken some ladies for a walk, suddenly to leave them without a word. Certainly not. He is either very ungentlemanly or very coarse.

J. R. The author you mention is not writing at present. We appreciate your complimentary remarks. The course our detractors are following will result only in injury to themselves; the old result, the engineer hoist by his own petard.

W. R. AGILE PENN is engaged at present upon his "Sister's Ward." In due time, however, we shall present another serial from his pen, entitled "The Detective's Ward." A serial by Dr. Turner, written in his best vein, will be given as soon as our space will permit. Your handwriting is good.

SANCTUM. The lady you name is a resident of Mobile, Ala. She was recently married recently, we believe.

SATURDAY JOURNAL

5

GLAD WERE THOSE MOMENTS.

BY J. PLACKETT.

Glad were those moments of love without measure,
Moments of memory's joyfullest treasure:
Oh, how my spirit looks back to the past,
And grieves that it vanished in anger's rude blast!

Joys are the purest balm to the heart,
As the fountain of its own fountain of art.

Oh, what a future of happiness gleamed

Thro' the golden horizon whence love's beacon beamed.

Curses have followed the first fatal blow

That laid all my fondest, long-cherished hopes low,

Curses seem only futurity's store,

And cursed, and lost is my soul evermore.

Why have I passed through the battle's rude din,

To suffer a far drearer contest within?

Bleeding from wounds which are sorrier by far

Than the horriest wounds of a physical war?

Better were death on the dread fields of strife,

Than fortune prolonged by so saddened a life!

Curses, I say, on the fates that have spared

From a merciful death to the sorrows since shared!

Would that gem again could be mine,

Whose virtues more brilliant than pure diamonds shine!

Would that my life could alone for the past,

And turn for a moment the force of the blast!

All that is sad in effect would be sweet;

Joys so long lost were returned more complete;

Skies, long o'ershadowed, resplendent would glow,

And heaven were shared in a measure below.

Strange Stories.

THE LILY OF FRANCE; OR, The Maid of Orleans.

BY AGILE PENNE.

A GREEN valley, overshadowed by wood-edged hights. Through the valley, like a silver serpent, winds the River Loire, the fairest of all fair France's streams. The sun-light—for it was noonday—gleamed down and kissed the rippling water, daintily.

A little rude road wound through the valley, following the course of the stream.

In a glade, between the river and the road—a sylvan nook, fit for the fawns of faerie to sport in—were a score or so of stout men-at-arms.

Lazily the soldiers reclined at ease upon the tufted surface of the earth; their weapons were near at hand, ready for use. The horses of the party champed their heavy bits and impatiently pawed the earth in the wood near by.

From the fashion of the armor of the soldiers, as well as from their ruddy faces, blue eyes, and flaxen hair, one could have told that they were English lances, riding under the Red Cross banner.

Two of the soldiers sat a little apart from the rest. One was a man of middle age; his armor was rusty, and bore the telltale marks of many a desperate fight. He was called Peter Thompson, though more commonly known as Black Peter, one of the boldest blades of all that great class of soldiers known as Free Lances—a hardy soldier, who had often rode to victory when the war-cry, "St. George and England" sounded in the van. His companion was a young man—nephew to Black Peter, and had just arrived from England. It was his first campaign.

The men-at-arms, who reposed so carelessly in the little glade, followed the banner of an adventurer known as Seaton the Scot. Why they lay thus in ambush, by the green banks of Loire's silver water, our story will tell.

"Uncle," said the nephew, Ralph, "prittie tell me why we wait here? For full six hours have we laid in ambush and yet no living soul, excepting a wolf, has appeared on the road."

"Patience, Ralph," replied Black Peter; "I know no more of the intentions of our leader, the Scot, than you, except that, just before we set out on this expedition, he told me that he hoped to capture a prize that would make all our fortunes."

"And what think you is the prize?"

"I know not. Early this morning a peasant sought our head-quarters in yonder town of Caen, and had a secret interview with our leader. When he departed, I heard the clink of gold in his pocket. Now, I know the pockets of the Scot are not well lined, for, ever since this she-fiend from below, Joan of Arc, has led the French forces, we English lances, have got nothing but hard blows and sound thrashings."

"Who is she? a devil from burning flames, say I!" cried the Free Lance, in a rage. "She first appeared when we lay before Orleans, and held the town in a grip of iron. Thrice had the French king, Charles, attempted to raise the siege, and thrice had he retreated in disorder. Then, suddenly, appeared this girl, Joan of Arc, whom some call the 'Virgin Maid,' and others, the Lily of France."

"She was a peasant girl, and lived in some little village, Arc, I think, and from it takes her name. Near her village was a large oak, said to be haunted. From this oak a spirit appeared to Joan, bade her buckler on armor and lead the lances of France to victory. Thus inspired, she sought the French king, and, at his court, picked him out from a group of others, although she'd never had seen him before. She told of the mission which Heaven had called upon her to perform. She led the French troops, donning armor like a man; beat us soundly before Orleans, and raised the siege. Since that time, disaster has followed our banner. We held nearly all France, but now, town after town, province after province, has been torn from us. Wherever the Lily of France displays her white banner, our soldiers fly in disorder from the field. Within another year, we shall be obliged to slink back to England like whipped curs, if we do not break the charm that holds French victory to the presence of the Maid."

Then, along the little road rung out the sound of a charger's hoofs, and a knight, clad in black armor, rode rapidly along. Surmounting his helmet was the Scottish lion; the scarf of plaid bound across his breast, told that the rider was Seaton, the Scot.

"To horse, my lads!" he cried, his features blazing with a strange excitement.

A few minutes and the Free Lances were in the saddle and formed in the road.

The Scot gave the command, "Forward," and the soldiers rode on.

Black Peter rode by the side of Seaton, in the advance.

"The prey in sight, noble captain?" he questioned.

"Ay, and a rich one, too; worth a king's ransom!" cried the Scot, slapping his mailed hand upon his side, in glee.

"Will he not be alarmed at our approach, and fly?"

"No; Stout Dick Shaw, with five lances, holds the road beyond. Our prey is already in the trap."

A sudden turn of the road, and the soldiers saw before them a woman, humbly clad like a peasant girl, seated upon a mule, and quietly coming along the road.

She stopped in alarm when the mail-clad men came swooping like hawks down upon her.

The face of Seaton, the Scot, wore an expression of fierce joy as he reined in his steed and gazed upon the pale, spiritual features of the girl.

"You are my prisoner, lady!" he cried.

The English lances were astonished. They had expected to encounter a warlike foe as they pressed onward, lance in hand, not a weak woman.

"Surely you do not mean that I am your prisoner?" the girl said, in surprise. "Do the English soldiers capture women?"

"You are quick to judge of our nation, lady!" replied Seaton, with a tinge of joy in his face, which he did not try to suppress.

"Do you not wear English colors?" and she pointed to the scarf upon his breast.

"Scotch; it's near enough, though," the knight replied. "Please you to turn and go with us."

"With you; where?" she asked.

"To the English camp, lady. I value you so highly that I would not exchange you for the best English knight that is held captive by your French brothers. Peter, ride by the side of the prisoner. Forward!"

The men-at-arms closed in around the girl, and again they proceeded on their way.

Again the road turned, following the windings of the river. Six more of the English lances stood in a group: four mounted on their horses and two standing on the ground, with their swords at the throat of a peasant, whom they had apparently just surprised.

"Whom have you there, Dick?" asked the Scot.

"A fellow whom we caught just now skulking through the wood," the soldier replied.

"Who are you?" Seaton asked of the Frenchman.

"Only a poor hunter, searching the wood for a wild boar," replied the prisoner. The short hunting-spear that he carried in his

hand, and the horn that hung at his girdle, confirmed his words.

With a searching glance, Seaton surveyed

"Thou liest, knave!" he cried; "no huntsman thou but a soldier. I have followed

the trade of arms too long to be deceived.

Are you a spy? Speak!"

"A spy! why should I spy where there is

no English face, excepting your own, and,

if I guess not wrong, you are far from the

English army. But you are right, captain, I

am a soldier, a deserter from the camp of

Charles. I am tired of war and I am going

home."

"For the present you go with us," Seaton said. "I have a suspicion that there may be

French lances near at hand. You shall not

warn them of my visit here. Peter, take the

lance up behind you."

Again the party rode on.

"What news from the French camp?"

asked the Scot. The prisoner did not reply on the instant. His eyes had caught sight of the maiden in the midst of the lances. A look of anger shot across his face. Then he quickly recovered his composure and made answer:

"Oh, wonderful news! The Lily of

France, Joan of Arc, has left the army of

Charles. Having seen him crowned at

Rouen, and thus accomplished the mission

assigned to her by Heaven, she has returned

again to her village home."

"This I knew before," said Seaton, dryly.

"What of the French king? Does he not

grieve at the departure of the Maid?"

"Ay, so much so, that I heard it rumored

that he had sent Dunois of Orleans to

raise the siege, and that he had been

captured by the English."

"Ten lances! we number more than that,"

the Scot muttered. Then a sudden thought

occurred to him. "Have you seen the Maid of Orleans?"

"Oh, a thousand times!" the prisoner an-

swept, readily.

"Look, she is our prisoner!"

"That girl the Lily of France?"

"Yes."

"You are dreaming," cried the Frenchman,

"She is no more Joan of Arc than I am Dunois of Orleans!"

"Thou art a lying knave!" cried Seaton,

in anger. "I know that you girl is Joan of Arc. Ere the sun shall set England's camp will hold her prisoner."

"Be not too sure of that, noble captain," said the Frenchman, laughing lightly; "there's many a slip between the cup and the lip."

And, even as he spoke, with a giant effort he seized Black Peter's lance and hurled that worthy out of the saddle. Then, forth from the fastness of the woody defile through which the road ran, came lance after lance in battle array. The war-cry, "St. Denis and France!" rung on the air!

The Maid of Orleans—for it was indeed Joan of Arc who had fallen into the hands of the adventurers—took advantage of the confusion to seize a battle-ax from one of the soldiers by her side, and cut her way through the English ranks.

Taken by surprise, the adventurers made but a feeble resistance and soon sought safety in flight.

Seaton, the Scot, was struck down by Dunois, the famous captain of Orleans, who was the pretended leader.

The Maid of Orleans—so it was indeed—had learned of her capture by the English, and though leading a force double in number to the adventurers', did not dare to attack him openly, lest, in the fight, the life of Joan might be sacrificed.

The pages of history tell how, in after years, the ill-fated Lily of France perished at the stake, burned to death by the order of England's king. On earth the soldier's sword and virgin's fame. In heaven the saintly crown.

The Crone Foiled.

A STORY OF THE SOUTH.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.



THE CRONE FOILED.

It was safe, and, relocking the drawer, he went about his duties.

After a long night came the solemn day, long ere the god of light reached the meridian, the funeral cortège departed for the silent necropolis, distant nine miles from the plantation, which was left in the care of the several male slaves.

The remainder followed their kind master to his last earthly resting-place.

The cortège had scarcely passed beyond the vision of those remaining behind, when an old hag hobbled up to the magnificent porch fronting the mansion. Then she paused and rapped against one of the marble columns with her hickory crutch.

The noise attracted the attention of Otto Dacres, the burly, but true-hearted overseer of the plantation, he brushed away the repentant tear that glistened upon his furrowed cheek.

"Yes, Otto. I would speak to you of Roland," he said, calm at last. "You were not with me when I drove him hence—why? Because he would not wed the woman of my choice. He wished to wed the woman of his, and now, poor boy, I blame him not. When last I heard of him he was mining in Australia. That was four years ago, since which time I have remained ignorant of his whereabouts. The neighbors regard him as dead, and it is said that Angelica Dupont, the woman he loved, is upon the eve of marriage.

"Oh, Dacres, you know not the many tears of repentance that have bedewed my pillow the past two years. I could step from the somber shore without a murmur, but I do know the truth concerning my boy—my only child. I have sown the wind, and now I justly reap the whirlwind, in the wrath of an offended God. Let Thursday I penned, in a sound mind and with repentant heart, a document which shall be known as the 'last will and testament of Gregory Killipson.'

"At that instrument, which you, as my administrator, will find in the second right-hand drawer of my old cabinet when I am dead, I have bequeathed my entire wealth to Roland—forgiven at last. You will keep the property in trust for him for twenty years. If at the end of that time he comes not to the estate to be sold, and the proceeds of the sale applied to objects mentioned in my will."

"But Dora

reminding you of the fact, to keep your spirits up? Ha! ha! ha! *What a day it is!* Ay, you torment me, each day that passes, by speaking of Calvert Herndon's murder," coweringly rejoined Brandt. "As to keeping my spirits up—bah! I've none left save the evil spirit which exists in my heart. I know that, to-day, I am as great a villain as you. But it was not so once."

"Very likely. Few men are born vi-

lains."

"Even admitting that I was instrumental in Herndon's death, what use is there in throwing out unending charges of murder? I believe, the burial of Pauline's father, a more horrible murder than if we had killed him outright."

"Victor Hassan, for example."

"While Calvert Herndon lay dressed for the grave, there was yet life in him. Neither you nor I stayed the funeral. Therefore, you are deeply involved as myself."

"That is absurd. How was I to know he still lived?"

"I am a physician, and I saw the fact before me; I advised you of it. Then, instead of countenancing an effort to resuscitate him, you threatened me if I disclosed my knowledge to others. I hold you proportionately accountable in this, Hallison Blair."

As Brandt thus spoke, he appeared to derive considerable self-assurance from the words. He looked up again; assumed a calmer air.

"But the pastile—the pastile?" maliciously suggested Lord Hallison, leaning slightly forward, and concentrating upon the other a glance that would seem to read his very soul.

"I have my opinions regarding that," returned the physician. "Since I came to London I have had time to reflect. I have my opinions."

"And, pray, what are they?" was the instant question.

"I am not only satisfied, in my own con-

science, of my innocence, but I suspect who placed the deadly pastile in the library."

"Have you?" Well, and whom do you suspect?"

"You."

"Pshaw! Let us talk of something else. I have been holding this glass in my hand till my wrist aches. Fill your glass and drink."

Nothing more was said upon the subject then, the physician poured out some wine, and each drank to the continued success of their scheme.

As they set down their empty glasses, the door opened, and a lady entered.

She was attired fashionably for a drive: jewels upon her fingers and person, and raiment of costly fabrics. Her ripe lips are arched; eyes sparkle with fire beneath the long, shading lashes; her mien is graceful, composed, commanding. It is Pauline—Lady Hallison Blair—a leading belle—a peer among the haughtiest and wealthiest

—without a rival in loveliness, brilliancy of conversation, and love of her gay life. Lords and ladies alike pay her their homage, forgetting, in her society, that she is the wife of a man disliked and shunned by all honorable men. All within her circle of acquaintance are captivated by her winning smile and sensible converse; yet not blind to notice, at times, a sudden change, when she would become cold toward those around her.

Lady Hallison Blair alone, knew the cause of these abrupt changes in herself, from life and gaiety, to silence and immobility. Amid the festive scenes in which she mingled, there would come a feeling as if her dead father stood near; a shadow like a cloud before the bright sun; a sensation of an existing something, which lingered, unseen, at her side, and stayed her light laugh, paled her cheek, rendered motionless the lips that had been moving fast in pleasant strain.

"Well," said Lord Hallison, "you are going out?"

"For a short drive," she answered, and her voice was even richer in its musical purity of tone than when she reiterated her betrothal vows with Victor Hassan, at the Home Mansion, beyond the Atlantic.

"You go alone, my love?" he pursued.

"Yes. I presume you have no desire to accompany me—you and Doctor Brandt seem so absorbed in each other," and here she flashed a significant look upon the physician, whose back was turned toward her, Blair saw, and smiled.

"I suppose my wife, Lady Hallison Blair, so favorably received everywhere, admired by all for her beauty, a queen of society, can do without the company of her husband this once—oh, love?"

"Oh, certainly. Rest assured I shall not long want for company."

"As *now*, then. I wish you an enjoyable ride."

She swept from the apartment without speaking further, and as the door closed after her, Lord Hallison turned to his companion with the exclamation:

"By Heaven! I think she grows more beautiful every hour. She was a perfect hour when I married her; now—now—what term is fitting; what word adequate; what name, unless we borrow that of Venus, could do justice to her charms!"

The physician made no answer.

"You see," continued the nobleman, "I have won a prize—you have gained a mint. Take my advice for a second time, and spend her money freely while you have opportunity. You know Pauline comes of age in November. All her father's wealth becomes hers then. Draw heavily while the chance lasts."

"Do you not apprehend that suspicion may be aroused, if I spend too much money?"

"Suspicion? Nonsense! Nobody in London knows the amount of the annuity left you by Calvert Herndon; and what if it were otherwise? It would make no difference. Had any individual sufficient brass to question you regarding your financial affairs, you could refer them to Lord Blair, who, I pledge you, would answer to their satisfaction. But never fear; we don't do things that way here."

Brandt arose and walked to the window. He simply wished to see Pauline driven off in the open barouche, with restless, gayly-caparisoned horses, held in rein by the flaxen-groom.

But he had no sooner looked out, his gaze had scarcely been directed to the opposite side of the street, when he uttered a stifled cry, dashed his hands to his forehead, and reeled back to the center of the apartment, falling.

What a day it is!

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT ALARMED THE PHYSICIAN.

ASTONISHED as was Hallison Blair by this singular condition of his friend, he did not pause to ascertain the cause, but sprung

quickly forward, and sustained Brandt's sinking form.

"In the name of the seven wonders, doctor, what ails you?" cried he, dragging and lifting the physician to a chair.

Brandt groaned, gasped, parted his lips, but could not articulate; and his eyes, bloodshot and staring, were distended widely. This exhibition now thoroughly alarmed Blair, who exclaimed:

"Mar alive! what has happened? Speak. Are you paralyzed? Are you dumb?"

For answer, Brandt hurriedly grasped his wrist, bounded from the chair, and ran to the window. Here he found his voice, for he fairly screamed:

"Look! Look there—see!" pointing down the street at a man who was walking rapidly away.

Blair followed with his eyes the direction of the other's finger, and instantly he, too, started, paled, was agitated.

"Can it be?" came from his lips, in husky accents.

"Do I dream? Fiends! no! I am awake. I am not mistaken. That form!—that step!—it must be—it is *Victor Hassan!* Doctor, by the cross of England!"

The physician had dashed wildly from the apartment, and presently Blair saw him emerge from the front entrance, and walk excitedly after the object that had caused their mutual alarm.

The Englishman had dashed wildly from the apartment, and presently Blair saw him emerge from the front entrance, and walk excitedly after the object that had caused their mutual alarm.

"Dios! but it is a more tedious way up

than to these rooms than all the walk from Trafalgar Square. My legs tire with having to mount so many steps, and I'm in a rage of impatience. By the bald head of the holiness, the Pope! turn your house down side upward, my lord, that I may reach you the easier when you send for me."

Blair knew this, for the reason that, even in the room where he and Brandt were seated, the hall-door was distinctly heard to open, and shut with a bang, and in a second thereafter, was audible a growl, something like the grumble of distant thunder, and the servants could be heard running away from the vicinity of the front entrance.

"What does that mean? Some one has forcibly entered your house—perhaps a drunken man."

Hallison Blair smiled. "No, doctor, it is all right. You shall see, presently, the man I sent for."

In a few minutes a heavy footfall was heard upon the stairs. The Englishman waited expectantly. Doctor Gulick Brandt was silent in his surprise. Unannounced, as if he were owner of the palatial residence, this strange visitor burst open the door, with hardly an effort to turn the knob, and roar:

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"Dios! but it is a more tedious way up

than to these rooms than all the walk from Trafalgar Square. My legs tire with having to mount so many steps, and I'm in a rage of impatience. By the bald head of the holiness, the Pope! turn your house down side upward, my lord, that I may reach you the easier when you send for me."

Blair knew this, for the reason that, even in the room where he and Brandt were seated, the hall-door was distinctly heard to open, and shut with a bang, and in a second thereafter, was audible a growl, something like the grumble of distant thunder, and the servants could be heard running away from the vicinity of the front entrance.

"What does that mean? Some one has forcibly entered your house—perhaps a drunken man."

Hallison Blair smiled. "No, doctor, it is all right. You shall see, presently, the man I sent for."

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"Dios! but it is a more tedious way up

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humbled, even to the dust. United we have attained the end that singly we could never have reached. To-morrow Angus Montgomery will be a ruined man; to-morrow, then, the League will end."

"Yes," said Stoll.

Tulip was silent.

"Do you not assent, Tulip?" O'Connel asked, finding that he did not speak.

"Yes, of course; I was not heeding what you said," replied Tulip, recovering from his abstraction.

"I think that we may congratulate ourselves upon our victory. We have achieved all that we set out to do. You Stoll, have recovered your money. Frances Chauncy has been returned to you, Tulip, and as for myself, the downfall of this man has given me all the revenge that I cared for." And as O'Connel spoke, though his manner was careless and full of triumph, yet he watched the face of Tulip Roche narrowly.

Tulip winced when he heard the name of the blonde beauty.

O'Connel's watchful eyes saw the movement, and a peculiar smile hovered for a moment around his lips. He guessed the reason why Tulip's face looked gloomy at the sound of Frances' name.

"You are wrong in one thing, O'Connel," Tulip said, slowly, and in a gloomy way. "The League may have been successful in carrying out the wishes of yourself and Stoll, here; but it has not given Frances Chauncy to me."

"No?" said O'Connel, in a tone of wonder.

Stoll looked astonished.

"No," repeated Tulip.

"But the *ruse* was successful by means of which we separated Montgomery and this pretty woman," O'Connel said.

"True, and I had reason to believe that I would once again hold my former place in her favor," Tulip replied.

"What makes you think that you can not do so?" O'Connel asked.

"By some means she has learned that I spoke falsely in regard to Montgomery's engagement with this French girl. When I called at her house this afternoon, the servant said that Miss Frances was out—I knew that he lied for I caught a glimpse of her in the parlor as I passed the house—and put a note into my hand which he said she had directed him to give me."

"What did the note contain?" O'Connel asked.

"A few little words. She told me that she knew the ungentlemanly device that I had used, and further said that she knew of no word to fully express the contempt with which my conduct had inspired her."

"Good-by then to your hope of winning her!" exclaimed Stoll, coarsely.

"She must have seen Montgomery and had an explanation with him," O'Connel said, thoughtfully.

"Yes, it is possible," Tulip replied.

"I am sorry, but I am sure that you will own that the League has done its best to aid you."

"Yes, I have no complaints to make," Tulip replied to O'Connel's speech.

"Night is coming on," Stoll said, rising and approaching the window.

"Say that we meet here at twelve to-morrow; by that time our final blow will be struck, and the League need exist no longer," O'Connel suggested, following Stoll's example, and rising as he spoke.

"That is satisfactory," Tulip said.

"Where are you bound now, O'Connel?" Stoll asked.

"To get a dinner somewhere; I've been so busy that I have not had any thing to eat since morning," replied O'Connel.

"And this evening? what are you going to do with yourself?"

"I shall visit Miss Leone."

"Ah! well, that's pleasant!" Stoll observed.

"Yes, but my visit has more to do with business than with pleasure," O'Connel observed, dryly.

"How so?" Stoll asked.

"In the first place, Miss Leone is a woman."

"Well, who didn't know that!" interrupted Stoll.

"Let me finish, please. As I said, she is a woman and therefore liable to change her mind. Few women are there in the world that do not esteem fickleness as a virtue. We have been playing for a great stake; the game is now in our hands; we can't afford to be baffled at the last moment—in the very hour of victory, by a woman's whim."

"Eh? I don't understand!"

"It is simple enough. I instructed Miss Leone to make Montgomery fall in love with her. I will do her the justice to say, that she has faithfully carried out my instructions, but she has also been foolish enough to fall in love with him."

"The deuce you say!" exclaimed Stoll.

"Now, it is just possible that this love that has completely taken possession of her nature, may urge her to do some very foolish action. Love, you know, my dear Stoll, in some natures amounts to madness. Now I do not wish my schemes to be set at naught by the mad act of a love-sick girl; therefore, I am going to keep my eyes upon Miss Leone until the money for this check is in my hands, then—why she may do what she likes."

Tulip and Stoll exchanged glances. They could not understand the mysterious tie that bound O'Connel and Leone together.

The conference broke up.

The League of Three was near its end.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HUNTED DOWN.

O'Connel and Leone were together in the apartment of the latter.

O'Connel was stretched out carelessly upon the sofa, Leone kneeling by his side.

The gas—for it was night—cast a brilliant light over the tableau.

The face of the girl was deadly pale. Strange blue circles were under the large dark eyes that blazed with a lurid light.

Leone had been imploring—striving with anxious words and tear-wet eyes to move the stony heart of O'Connel.

"Oh, Lionel, will you not have mercy?" she cried, in tones trembling with emotion.

O'Connel looked at the kneeling girl with a chilling sneer upon his face.

"Don't waste time in foolish supplications," he said, in icy tones. "You ought to know me well enough to be certain that words alone will not swerve me from any purpose that I have resolved to carry out."

"You will not spare Montgomery, then?" she cried, rising as she spoke, a strange look upon her white features.

"No, he is doomed. Three powerful enemies have dragged him down."

"The League of Three, and you are the

chief of the league!" she said, looking him straight in the face.

"Hallo!" cried O'Connel, in astonishment, rising to a sitting posture; "how the deuce did you know any thing about the League of Three?"

"Never mind *how* I gained the knowledge," she replied. "Have I not spoken the truth? Are you not the chief of this league of villains? Three of you against one man."

"You know so much, perhaps you can tell the names of the members of the League."

"I can guess. You are one—the brains; the other two, Tulip Roche and Herman Stoll, the instruments that have done your will."

"Exactly," said O'Connel, coolly. "Your wits are shrewder than I thought for. You have guessed rightly regarding the League. We three have crushed Angus Montgomery in the dust."

"Lionel, you are a demon! What has this man ever done to you that you should hate him?" cried Leone, in despair.

"Won the love of the woman that I had marked as mine!" replied O'Connel, with just a trace of passion in his voice. "I swore that I would be even with him for it, and I've kept my word. Step by step have I advanced to the summit of my hopes. Before a year is over, Frances Chauncy will be my wife. I love the doll-faced beauty; that is, as well as I can love any thing. I am better as a hater than a lover."

A key turned quickly in a door-lock started both O'Connel and Leone.

The sound came from a door that led, not into the entry, but into an adjoining apartment.

Then the door opened quickly and the Englishman, Pipgan, followed by Montgomery, entered the room.

O'Connel started to his feet, in astonishment.

Quick as a cat, Pipgan sprang upon the young man, hurled him over, backward, on the sofa, and dexterously drew O'Connel's pistol from the revolver-pocket behind. Then he released him and quietly retreated from him.

"Loaded—a seven-shooter, eh?" said Pipgan, as he examined the pistol.

"I had an idea that you carried something of this sort."

"I didn't know but that some wild idea might come into your head to use it when you found yourself cornered. I beg your pardon, miss, for making a disturbance in your room," and Pipgan bowed politely to Leone, who stood, wonder-struck at the scene.

With a great effort, O'Connel recovered his composure. He rose to his feet and surveyed the Englishman, calmly.

"What do you mean by this outrage?" he asked.

"Oh, that game won't work," said Pipgan, with a grimace. "I've been occupying that key-hole I've heard about all that's been said here. Besides, you know well enough who I am. You recognized me the other night when I was got up as the 'swell.' I knew you the moment I put eyes upon you, though you have bleached your black hair to a yellow tint, Mr. Lionel Drexel."

O'Connel—as we shall continue to call him—bit his lip until the red blood crimsoned the white teeth.

"So I'm hunted down, eh?" he said, with a bitter laugh.

"Ex-actly," said Pipgan, laconically.

"You were right; I did recognize you, Mr. Christopher Pipgan, but, like a fool, I did not expect to find the celebrated detective officer so far from Bow street. Did you come clear across the water after me?"

"Bless you, no!" replied the detective officer, for the little Englishman was indeed a detective, renowned as one of the best in all England. "I came over for my own amusement, just to see the country, but, some way I got tangled up in your affair, and this is the end of it. You're wanted."

O'Connel understood what the officer meant.

"I suppose I understand; still I put the question: what for?"

"For the murder of Captain Ernest Malper," replied Pipgan, in a dry, business-like tone.

Montgomery started in horror.

O'Connel noticed the start and laughed, carelessly.

"It astonishes you, does it? Wait, you will be more astonished." Then he turned to the detective. "Don't you want her, too?" and he pointed to Leone.

Pipgan did not answer.

"Oh, that's the game, is it?" O'Connel said, bitterly. "Good, I'll block it. Leone, I understand! you have betrayed me to this man!"

"No, no!" cried the girl, quickly.

"Oh, I see it all! This gentleman is to take me across the water and leave you for him," and he pointed to Montgomery.

"It's no use to deny it. I know you by the ring on your finger. I saw it in the car, the other night!" Pipgan cried.

"I will not deny the truth," Leone said. "I am the White Witch. Lionel, my brother, talks in his sleep; he has been accustomed to lie down in my room nearly every afternoon. From him, in his slumber, I heard all the particulars of the plot against you, long before he attempted to carry it out. I tried to save you as the White Witch, even while I was leading you to ruin as Leone. Can you forgive me?" she asked, timidly.

"Yes, and bless you for your love," Montgomery replied.

Little more remains to be told.

Herman Stoll and Tulip Roche were interviewed by the shrewd detective.

The result of which was, that Montgomery received quite a handsome sum of money, and two conspirators found it convenient to leave New York for a European tour.

Frances Chauncy is still Frances Chauncy, a living warning to fickle beauties.

Among all Montgomery's old friends none were more rejoiced to see him restored to wealth than the dark-eyed Agatha.

Montgomery and Leone were married and are happy.

Pipgan returned to England; he likes America, but says they don't have any hate here.

In the mines of Montana is a noted gambler with streaked hair, black and yellow. He is called Jim York. Few would recognize in the cool, reckless desperado, the polished Lionel O'Connel.

He had played a desperate game—lost, and has left civilization forever.

In drink and play, he finds the opiate that dulls remembrance.

His fate is easily predicted.

A drunken brawl—revolvers and bowie-knives in active play, and then?

A grave in some lonely gulch, whose sands show traces of the precious metal that he played so recklessly, and yet so coolly, to win.

English Government, but for this gentleman, Mr. Montgomery."

"I understand. What are the conditions?" O'Connel's coolness had returned to him.

"First, that check; second, a full confession of this League of Three business; one that we can use against your accomplices; next, all the money that you have obtained by plundering this gentleman."

"I accept; and you will release me?"

"Yes."

"I'll write the confession at once."

O'Connel sat down to the table and commenced writing. Pipgan leaned over him.

"Leone," whispered Montgomery to the girl as he held her tightly to his breast, "what is the secret that binds you to this man?"

"Can you not guess?" asked the girl.

"He is my brother. I swore to my mother on her death-bed that I would never forsake him—though he knew his terrible nature well—but that I would cling to and try to save him from the consequences of his evil acts."

"And this crime—the motive?"

"This Captain Malper was in love with me; came to the house when Lionel was away, though I begged of him not to persecute me with a love that was distasteful. One night he and Lionel met; a quarrel followed, ended by the deed of blood." Shuddering, Leone hid her face on Montgomery's breast.

Pure as gold from the fire was Leone's heart.

Montgomery felt that he had won a treasure.

"There, that covers it," said O'Connel, signing. "Here is the note." He laid it on the table; then, from a secret pocket in his vest, he took a number of checks. "And here's the money that belongs to him. Now, I'll throw something into the bargain. Leone," and he turned to the girl, "I give you back your promise; henceforth your path in life separates from mine; but I am as gold from the fire was Leone's heart."

The detective quietly gathered up the valables.

"You're a sharp fellow," he said, addressing O'Connel.

"My wit has saved my neck this time!" replied O'Connel, with a cool smile.

"Just look at this!"

And with a smile on his face, Pipgan handed a telegram to O'Connel. He took it with a look of wonder.

"No case. Captain Malper recovered," the telegram read.

O'Connel stared at it in rage. It was dated at London; a cable dispatch!

"What the deuce does this mean?" he asked.

"Plain as the nose on your face. Malper, the man you shot, didn't die. You thought you had killed him and fled to this country. When I saw you and your sister here, I remembered something about the murder—for everybody thought it was a murder—and then I had met both of you in Liverpool long ago, when you were on the turf. That's how I came to know you. I thought, like the rest who read about the affair in the newspapers, that Malper was dead, of course killed by you. I telephoned, per cable, for instructions; that's the answer. You're done, my boy. I had no right to arrest you

so easily subdued. When the worst fit of faintness was on her she was rising a swell, from the top of which she hoped to make some favorable discovery. She knew if she did not that she must sink to rise no more.

Imagine, then, her pleasurable sensations when she saw the ruddy glow of camp-fires become suddenly visible on the opposite bank of a small river in the distance.

The poor girl, who had been so long without food, at once recollected the injunctions of her future husband.

The opposite bank of this nameless river was forests—dense forests on every side—while the site chosen by the Indians for their camp was a small natural clearing, encompassed on three sides by trees, on the fourth by the stream. Matata could see rude temporary huts and a large fire, which served the purpose of light as well as to cook their evening meal. It was blazing high and bright, some lads having cast on an armful of dried brush.

Some lads—yes; and as Matata looked keenly around, she saw that the whole of the denizens of the camp, if we except a few white-haired warriors, consisted of children, striplings, old women and young girls. The Prairie Rose's heart bounded within her. Had Providence, the good Manitou, she said, while making her lose the trail she was so bent on following, brought her to that which she had been seeking for many moons?

Pressing her hand upon her heart, she looked around, examining every feature of a scene that might have satisfied the imagination of even the great painter of the rugged life of the bandit or the outlaw. The men were seated on a log near the fire, conversing in whispers; the lads, in deference to their superiors, stood a little aloof, enjoying the prospect of a hearty meal; the children played in merry groups, but it was among the girls and young women that Matata cast her eager glances.

They were a little to the left of the fire, and yet within its influence, which, while the blaze lasted, sufficed to light up the arches of the forest and render a certain area like day, for the night had come slowly.

Matata slowly scrutinized their features, and at last, with a bounding heart, her eyes fell upon the form of a charming girl of fifteen, who, some what grave and sad, stood a little apart from the rest of the group, alone and unattended.

The Prairie Rose at once made up her mind, every other consideration for a moment vanishing before her sisterly affection for that boy and girl, who no longer had parents to protect and love them. Crossing the stream and tottering up the bank, assuming even greater weakness than she felt, Matata boldly entered within the circle of light, stood a moment in view of the whole camp, and then moved with slow and feeble steps toward the group of elders.

Not a sign of greater emotion than a nervous twitching of the lips, denoted that the warriors were surprised, but at a signal from the oldest chief, the father of Theoderigo, six of the stoutest youths glided beneath the covert, to assure themselves that this startling appearance of a woman did not presage some ambush or treacherous attack.

"Whence come, and what seek you, my daughter?" asked the white-headed old chief, after sufficient delay to make the question courteous and dignified.

"I am an-hungered and a-thirst—for many moons have I traveled on the great prairie alone—and now my strength fails me, and I fall by the way."

"You shall sit at our feast presently," continued the chief. "Who and what are you?"

"I am Matata, daughter of the Biting Panther, the Huron," said the girl, standing as erect as her strength would allow. "Theoderigo, the Black Hawk of the Shawnees, has taken the scalps of my father and my mother and scattered to the four winds of heaven the ashes of my wigwam; he has taken into captivity to adopt in his tribe my brother and my sister. A woman knows but her heart. I have followed the hills over; their very footsteps were nailed upon my heart; and now, after the great storm, the good Manitou has sent me here because I had no food; and I have found my sister."

"Matata!" cried a childish voice; and despite all red-skin customs, the girls were clasped in each other's arms.

All looked on in admiration. Even the old man smiled grimly.

"A brother, I hope," continued Prairie Rose, glancing uneasily at the group of boys, where a lad of sixteen stood sullen and moody.

"No," cried the boy, with a look of profound contempt, "the Hurons are squaws, they can not defend themselves; the paint on the face of Little Bear is Huron, but his heart is blood-red—he is a Shawnee, the adopted son of the Bald Eagle."

A proud look from the aged warrior, a murmur of applause from the Shawnee followed, and Matata, overwhelmed with shame and sorrow, was led away by her sister. In a few minutes the young scouts returned to say that all was still in the forest and on the plain, and that Matata was truly alone.

Then the evening meal was partaken of, Matata and her sister receiving a most liberal allowance. With this the young Huron girl retired under the shadow of a tree apart, taking her sister with her, who moved passively along.

"I can not eat," sighed the Prairie Rose. "Ononda has broken my heart—the last of his race, a traitor."

Bright Fawn, the girl's name, laughed one of those low, almost inaudible Indian laughs which are taught by habit of caution and the daily experience of danger, a laugh that made Matata look up.

"Ononda sly fox—very little bear," she whispered in the other's ear; "all Huron—heart is all to revenge his father's death."

A bright radiance passed over the face of Matata, and an hour later she slept in peace, wrapped in her sister's arms, beneath the tents of their hereditary foes—the Shawnees.

(To be continued—Continued in No. 55.)

A Strange Phenomenon.—One of the most curious things connected with the eruptions of Cotopaxi, and other South American volcanoes is the fact that countless quantities of fish, mingled with mud and clay, are sometimes vomited out of the craters or from fissures in the mountain-sides. The fish, well named *Arges Cyclopum*, no doubt lives in subterranean lakes that lie somewhere in the lime of fire; and this fish is known to exist in certain elevated lakes on the mountains, but probably breed more abundantly in internal reservoirs. Cases have occurred where their eruption and consequent decay have produced pestilence.

TO THE FOX.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

Poor Fox, in many ways and shapes
They treat thee badly, and I sigh
To read thou couldst not get the grapes
Because they hung them up so high.

In reading-books, on every page,
Thou'rt chased by Tom, and Bob, and Ben
And children get into a rage
Because thou'rt over a fat hen.

Thou art in every other verse
Chased by the inevitable hound.
Which e'er is gainling on your course
By taking more feet at a bound.

The question never is, "How soon
Will he find safety 'mong the rocks?"
But—"How far has the hound to run
Before he catches Mr. Fox?"

So night and day their art pursued,
Yet still the foxes' power was fly;
So it is easily understood
Why thou'rt obliged to be so sly.

I stand upon the golden rule:
And chickens, I'll deny thee not;
My neighbor has a barn-yard full,
Thou'rt welcome, fox, to all he's got!

The Dwarf's Warning.

A STORY OF ANCIENT MEXICO.

BY CAPT. CHAS. HOWARD.

TOWARD the close of the last century, Emanuel Montiviedo became noted as the most expert watchmaker and lapidary in the city of Mexico. He was a young man, of faultless mold and prepossessing appearance. He was industrious, seldom leaving his little shop during the day. Indeed, he had no excuse for idleness, for more orders continually covered his desk than he and Pedrio, his dwarfish assistant, could well execute.

Pedrio was ever ready as the meadow lark—a song, not at all unmelodious in its accents, bubbled to his lips while he arranged the tiny wheels and delicate hair-springs, or cut the precious stones for beautiful fingers. No mountain back was Pedrio's. He was a dwarf, minus deformities, and ten years his master's senior. His countenance betokened intelligence, and

not a real, not a real! I ought to pay thee, Emanuel, for giving me a chance to kill the dog. But, thou'rt said nothing of Innette, save that I should spare her life. Suppose I convey her to my mountain palace, whither thou'rt come and woe anew. By Jove! good Montiviedo, some

"Good!" cried the lapidary, grasping Joachio's hands. "What will thou charge me for the job? Ask thine own price, Joachio."

"Not a real, not a real! I ought to pay thee, Emanuel, for giving me a chance to kill the dog. But, thou'rt said nothing of Innette, save that I should spare her life. Suppose I convey her to my mountain palace, whither thou'rt come and woe anew. By Jove! good Montiviedo, some

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"Five good fellows will be enough," said

"I will do it," cried the other. "By the cross, she shall be a widow an hour after the bridal."

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"Not a real, not a real! I ought to pay thee, Emanuel, for giving me a chance to kill the dog. But, thou'rt said nothing of Innette, save that I should spare her life. Suppose I convey her to my mountain palace, whither thou'rt come and woe anew. By Jove! good Montiviedo, some

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